

Remembering days after JFK's death

NOW THAT Oliver Stone is set to film a movie in Dallas about the Kennedy assassination, Dallasites have been reminiscing about their experiences from that 1963 weekend.

At the Crescent Club's fifth anniversary, guests Spaulding Jones and Bill Hudson traded their memories.



NANCY SMITH

Back in '63, Spaulding was regional manager of Macmillan Co. and had an office on the fourth floor in the Texas School Book Depository. He had taken daughters Autumn and April to his office that morning, and later when he was shown pictures of Lee Harvey Oswald, said, "That was the man we rode up with in the elevator this morning."

He took his daughters home and returned to the office in time for the motorcade. Spaulding and his associate, Herb Junker (who died about five years ago), were on the street when the shots were fired. They were let back into the depository because they were tenants.

Spaulding happened to have his camera, and went upstairs to take pictures of the sixth floor window scene, which he says may be some of the only ones that still exist.

Before the motorcade, Herb had commented that a depository window would be an excellent place for a gunman if one were to take aim at the president. His comment got back to the FBI, but when they started trying to find him, they learned he had already departed for Baton Rouge, La., where he was taking textbooks for a teachers' convention. The FBI put roadblocks up on the way to Baton Rouge. Herb drove all the way there, unaware he was being sought.

Spaulding remained in the depository until nightfall while his employees were questioned; all five of his secretaries were witnesses to the assassination. The last they let go was a secretary, Doris Long. When Spaulding asked why she was there so late, the FBI told him, "because she won't tell us her age."

Meanwhile, Bill, a prominent Dallas oilman, says Oswald had been interviewed by his company and was offered a job the month before. Oswald had turned it down and went to work for the depository.

Several days earlier, Bill had bought some high-powered rifles for deer hunting. That weekend, he and some friends went to get his deer lease. The FBI had tracked gun sales in Dallas and learned of Bill's new guns and traced him to the deer lease. Bill then spent the next part of the weekend explaining why he'd bought his guns and how he was using them, and he was later interviewed by the Warren Commission.